

The rise of the *blended professional* in higher education: a comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States

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Abstract This paper builds on earlier work by the author to explore the international dimensions of a study of the changing roles and identities of professional staff in higher education (Whitchurch 2008a, b). It further develops the concept of the *blended professional*, characterising individuals with identities drawn from both professional and academic domains, and examines the institutional spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies that they construct. Comparisons between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States are used to provide indicators of possible futures for this group of staff, including their positioning in the university community, the challenges they face, and the potentials that they offer to their institutions.

Keywords Professional roles · Professional identities · Blended professionals

Introduction

This paper extends earlier work of the author on the identity dispositions of professional staff in higher education, and focuses particularly on the concept of *blended professionals*, who not only cross internal and external institutional boundaries, but also contribute to the development of new forms of *third space* between professional and academic domains (Whitchurch 2008a, b). Whereas recent work on academic identity (for instance, Barnett and di Napoli 2008; Becher and Trowler 2001; Deem et al. 2007; Henkel 2000; Kogan and Teichler 2007; Locke 2008), has tended to focus on the emergence of specialists in areas such as marketing and enterprise, and on their positioning as “managers”, the study on which this paper draws addressed the identity movements of new forms of “managerial professional” that have not yet been fully mapped (Gornitzka et al. 2005; Rhoades 1996, 1998, 2005).

The first part of the study was based on 29 respondents in 3 different types of university in the UK. Arising from this, a typology of professional identities was developed that

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Table 1 Typology of professional identities (Whitchurch 2008a, b)

Identity dispositions	Characteristics
Bounded professionals	Work within clear structural boundaries (e.g function, job description)
Cross-boundary professionals	Actively use boundaries for strategic advantage and institutional capacity building
Unbounded professionals	Disregard boundaries to focus on broadly based projects and institutional development
Blended professionals	Dedicated appointments spanning professional and academic domains

represented different approaches to functional and organisational boundaries, as represented by, for instance, job descriptions and organisation charts (Table 1).

Although the first part of the study was targeted at ‘mainstream’ professional staff in functional areas such as student services, finance and human resources, as well as faculty, research or departmental offices, it became apparent that staff were increasingly being recruited to dedicated appointments that spanned both professional and academic domains. These staff were categorised as *blended professionals*. They managed areas of work variously described as learning or business partnership, student life, diversity, outreach, institutional research, programme management and community development. They were likely to have been appointed on the basis of external experience obtained in contiguous sectors such as adult or further education, regional development, or the charitable sector, and offered academic credentials in the form of master’s degrees and doctorates, although they were not employed on academic terms and conditions. The second part of the study, therefore, conducted overseas, focused on staff in such mixed roles, to see whether there were lessons to be learnt for the UK. In Australia, 10 interviews were undertaken with respondents from 2 different types of institution, and in the US, with 15 respondents from 2 public state universities.

Conceptualising the *blended professional*

Respondents working in mixed areas of activity, as described above, and characterised as *blended professionals*, demonstrated an ability to capitalise on a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘not belonging’ entirely to either professional or academic domains, often working in ambiguous conditions. Thus, one respondent spoke of dealing with a “multi-layered reality”, which arose from the fact that fluid areas such as learning partnerships might be represented in different ways in the same institution, “sometimes ... as an academic unit, and sometimes as an office”. This could be used to advantage in building common ground with different constituencies, because the person concerned was not necessarily seen as being attached to specific agendas. However, they were, at the same time, obliged to cope with multiple perceptions and less than optimal structures: “We have very different versions of reality, where the institution is, or should be, going and how we should get there....” and “...[we are] working within a flawed system and finding the flexibility to do that...”

Another person described their ‘in between’ positioning as working in “an invisible maze”, with “... history and tensions between different factions and groups.” Such activity could also have a political dimension, when individuals entered contested space and played a part in “the power struggles and battles that go on”. This in turn created uneven levels of commitment, with associated risks:

“Just because you have one department on board, it doesn’t mean you have the other fifteen on board.”

Working in this uneven terrain often involved seeing opportunities in the unexpected and building alliances, for instance bringing together learning and/or business partners from within the university and the community. It also involved accepting that although some initiatives might fail, they might also create a dialogue that had not existed before, and lead to new forms of activity. This process was described by another respondent as:

“... making friends, pulling out threads, weaving things together, building up networking and common practice ... and actually trying to take complexity and make it simple.”

At the same time as working within formal, hierarchical structures and lines of responsibility, therefore, individuals were also developing lateral relationships and networks. Another respondent spoke of turning “usefully loose” structures to advantage by utilising “round table discussions” to persuade academic staff to contribute to partnership activity, on which their institution increasingly depended. Individuals with the capacity to do this were likely to have academic as well as professional credentials, for instance, in undertaking practical, in-house research, that would help to move agendas forward:

“... work[ing] out some good practice, some evidence-based case studies... that academics can then buy into...”

In the study, the identities of *blended professionals*, arising from the approaches described above, were conceptualised in relation to four dimensions of professional activity, namely spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies, as shown in Table 2.

A sense of not ‘belonging’ entirely to either professional or academic constituencies could also create legitimacy issues. As one respondent reflected: “I think that notion that you can encompass academic activities within an administrative set up is very uncomfortable for a lot of people.” Individuals were, therefore, obliged to build their authority, in situ, via day-to-day activity and relationships with colleagues, rather than via their position in the organisation chart or specialist knowledge. This could lead to dissonance in relation to expectations arising from formal briefs, for instance, that an individual would take a record of meetings, even though they might have a doctorate and be located outside the academic administration. Thus, legitimacy depended on “... what you are, not what you represent”, and “... those academics that you have worked with have a different view of you in [a] committee, even though you are taking the notes”.

There could also be a gap between the respect accorded to a particular organisational location or office, and to individuals within it:

“If it is me talking to individuals in my capacity as a head of section that is fine, but I think probably as an entity we are quite difficult.”

Overcoming this mismatch of perceptions was likely to involve finding, or creating, a language that would “speak to” academic agendas, and developing “champions” for new forms of activity:

“... there are people I’ve always got on with, because they have always understood a ... credit system and we’ve talked the same language from day one. Other people ... I am always trying to win them over...”

Table 2 Conceptual framing of *blended professionals*

Dimensions of professional activity	Identity dispositions of <i>blended professionals</i>	Theoretical frames
Spaces	An ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer multiple understandings of the institution accommodate the ambiguities of <i>third space</i> between professional and academic domains re-define, modify professional space and boundaries work round formal structures 	Reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> idea of identity as a “project”, involving an individual’s interpretation of their positioning in relation to others, rather than a fixed core or sense of belonging (Giddens 1992) “supercomplex” conditions with multiple dimensions (Barnett 2000)
Knowledges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> embed and integrate professional and academic knowledge undertake research into institutional activity create an interactive knowledge environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “weak boundaries” in relation to professional knowledges (Bernstein 1970) “relaxed” frames of reference (Bernstein 1970) “elite” forms of professional who apply their expertise to complex individual tasks (Friedson 2001)
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enter and understand academic discourse/debate form alliances with key partners facilitate autonomy of own staff construct professional networks, internally and externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “strong ties” to own internal networks (Granovetter 1973) “weak ties” to external networks (Granovetter 1973)
Legitimacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer academic credentials achieve credibility in academic debate/ space challenge the status quo manage the duality of ‘belonging’ and ‘not belonging’ to academic space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “communicative action”, establishing “common definitions” oriented to “coming to an understanding with [others]”, as opposed to “exerting an influence <i>upon</i> others.” (Habermas 1984)

One respondent felt that appreciating how “academic mindsets” were located in disciplinary, rather than in organisational frameworks, had enabled them to persevere with the dialogue and to participate in disinterested, academic debate, so as “to divorce argument from people” and not be distracted by criticism:

“You have to have the debate to move forward... Many administrators do not appreciate this...”

However, as a result of ‘identity stretch’ between professional and academic spheres of activity, more than one respondent spoke of not knowing “what kind of professional” they were any more. Others said that they were building their identity as generic “higher education professionals”, for which the parameters were not yet clearly defined.

International comparisons

Through the second, international, component of the study it was possible to set the UK element in a wider context, and to obtain a broader view of possible trends in professional identities. The most striking difference between respondent profiles in the UK and those in Australia and the US was that a much higher proportion of staff in Australia and the US had

higher degrees. In the US, where professional staff would be expected to have completed a dedicated master's programme in, for instance, higher education administration or student affairs, 93% of respondents had master's degrees and 60% had doctorates. In Australia, where there was generous support for advanced study, 80% of respondents had master's degrees and 60% had doctorates. The comparable percentages for the UK were 27% and 8%. In the US particularly, this picture reflects an established knowledge base for professional staff, which might be seen as an academic, or applied professional, discipline in its own right.

Moreover, the terms 'administration' and 'management' are understood differently in Australia and the US from the way that they are understood in the UK. In Australia, professional staff refer to themselves more openly as "managers", rather than modulating this via the use of the term "administration" (Whitchurch 2006). By contrast, in the United States, the most senior institutional managers, including presidents, are referred to as "academic administrators". Thus, the term "administration" is associated with institutional policy and governance, and as something that is undertaken at a higher level than "management", whereas in the UK "administration" has tended to become devalued in that it is often used to refer to procedural, and even clerical, tasks. Furthermore, professional staff in the US appear to have a greater equivalence vis-à-vis their academic counterparts. As one UK respondent put it, "administration [in the US] is not second class, and people move much more freely between [professional and academic activity]..."

Australia

Although there was evidence of potential for *blended* identities in Australia, a clear demarcation between professional and academic activity appeared to create more resistance to their development than in the UK. As one respondent suggested, professional staff were "indoctrinated that there are boundaries, and that they... step over boundaries at [their] peril." This could create "us" and "them" perceptions, as described by Dobson (2000) and Dobson and Conway (2001). Perhaps because of this, there remained a sense of moving back and forth between the two domains, working round existing structures, rather than of a coalescence of activity:

- "Nobody has the whole picture ... I'd like to think I have equal bits of both pictures [from the management and academic perspective]."
- "There is that sense of a divided whole... that we're trying to fit together but it doesn't always fit."
- "... it's about bridging that ... cultural divide."

Although perceptions of a boundary appeared to have slowed the development of *third space* between professional and academic domains, there was, nevertheless, evidence of potential for *blended* activity to emerge in practice, as evidenced by the following respondents:

- "... you find good people and network with them."
- "... we all need to work in multi-modal fashion, where there are partnerships on all sorts of levels."
- "[It's about] ... acquiring an academic headset."

Thus, one respondent described how they were able, through long-standing networks, to construct a "one-stop shop for the external environment to interact" with the university, and to generate business and technology initiatives with an education component. They spoke of "clusters" and "nodes" of activity, through which new developments were spawned.

Furthermore, as those with *blended* identities move into more senior positions, they may in turn influence recruitment strategies. Offshore provision, for instance in south-east Asia, an area in which programme managers, academic staff and local tutors worked together, was suggested as a field in which *blended* activity was likely to develop. One respondent mentioned the emergence of Executive Director roles, of “people with credentials but not necessarily who’ve come through an academic pathway... we have two of those in our senior management group who are not there as academic leaders, but who are there as leaders.” It may be that these will also provide a pathway for *blended* professionals. At the same time, others reported structural difficulties for professional staff if they wished to undertake academically oriented activity. For instance, one learning support office comprised staff on both academic and professional conditions of service, but although they worked side by side and made an equivalent contribution, professional staff did not have access to study leave, nor did they have rights to intellectual property, despite having publications.

The fact that the contractual situation in Australia differs from the UK and the US also creates different types of opportunities for professional staff, who are generally employed on fixed-term contracts. Although contracts are renewable, there was evidence of individuals taking the opportunity of working outwith formal organisational structures in more project-oriented roles. Rather than adopting *blended* identities as such within an institution, some people were “opting out” by operating as internal consultants on a series of part-time, and even concurrent, projects. In the case of one respondent, this included internal secondments, academic tutoring, and programme development:

“I’ve usually got three or four contracts going... starting and ending different dates, working for different areas... the interesting thing is that most areas try to retain you when they know that you can actually do the job within the parameters... I’ve discovered that I’m better in a project type role, rather than a maintenance role... and I can make things happen, and so I’m better for the university in that area as well...”

This person, therefore, had a sense of belonging to two projects and also to an academic department. Their ideal was “to have a position that allowed you to have modules in your job description that you could fill with activity...” It may be, therefore, that there are a growing number of project- and portfolio-oriented staff that operate more comfortably and effectively outside formal organisational structures, and that this may be a pattern of working that will become more widespread:

“...there’s always contract work going now.... connecting with people and communicating and facilitating and negotiating are probably my skills...”

Furthermore, this respondent saw it as an advantage that they did not have to become involved with “the politic[s] that goes on” and therefore did not “have [those] tensions.” Perhaps as a result of what appeared, at times, to be boundary resistance, and also because of the nature of their contracts, respondents in Australia were distinguished by an active approach to the development of their own portfolios, and were clear about their responsibility for their own futures.

The United States

In the United States, professional staff appeared to have a stronger profile and a clearer sense of professional identity than in the UK or Australia. In particular, staff with mixed backgrounds and roles were more established as a grouping, and their activities were

mainstreamed in a way that was less evident in the UK or Australia. Such people were likely to be involved in research- or practice-oriented developmental activity, and to work in, for instance, offices of institutional research or student affairs. Furthermore, more than half the respondents had interface roles, involving, for instance, relations with students, the community, alumni, or the state legislature.

Key differences between the US, on the one hand, and the UK or Australia included:

- Respondents referred consistently to having the respect and trust of academic colleagues on the basis of their professional knowledge. This contrasts with, for instance, ongoing efforts made by *blended professionals* in the UK to establish their credentials, and the sense of a boundary between professional and academic domains in Australia. This greater sense of equivalence may arise not only from the credentials that individuals offer on a personal basis, but also from a recognition that roles linking an institution to its community, and indeed to state governments, are a necessary element of its public service role.
- There was greater involvement in, and expectation of, an academic element to professional roles and identities. Eleven of the fifteen people interviewed were, in their current roles, undertaking some form of teaching, tutoring, mentoring or research activity. This included teaching on dedicated master's programmes for professional managers, and supervising master's and doctoral students. More than 50% of respondents had published papers. Thus, one respondent in a policy and planning office described their role as "very much like a research-based academic job..." and another remarked that: "I can go toe to toe with faculty."
- Staff in the US tended to operate in a more political environment, both within institutions and in relation to, for instance, state legislatures. Many of them had a lobbying role between the two. There were expectations on them to be able to speak the language of politicians, and to translate, for instance, proposals by academic staff "who don't [necessarily] know how to present their stuff in soundbites".

Two broad areas of activity demonstrate the extension of professional roles in the US:

Institutional research/policy analysis

In the US, data collection is used for extensive institutional research and policy analysis in areas such as:

- Access and equity.
- Social trends and patterns of participation.
- Student participation and feedback.
- Enrolment, including recruitment, retention and graduation rates.
- Tuition fees and financial aid.
- University/state and international relations.

Offices of institutional research not only conduct in-house projects in such areas, but also undertake policy analysis, presenting the outcomes in a way that is appropriate for a variety of internal and external audiences. Communicating data so that it was helpful for decision-making was, according to one respondent "... as much an art as a science. Timing, politics, means of communication, the media you use ... is probably more important than the actual findings of an analysis." Furthermore, the analysis and presentation of local data tended to be set in a broader context of "public service research".

Student affairs

Parallel to institutional research and policy analysis, the field of student affairs had, according to one respondent, become “increasingly infused with academic content”, whereby pastoral functions traditionally undertaken by academic staff had been:

“largely replaced by [professional] staff... [who supported students] in residential life programmes, student development programmes, organised student groups, all the kind of co-curricular aspects of student life, residential learning in the halls... Those people are ... academically informed in both the content and theory of student development and research....”

Without having a tenured faculty post, therefore, these professionals deliver broad bundles of activity on campus, including tutoring, coaching and programme development in relation to, for instance, student leadership, community action or parent outreach.

The inclusion of roles involving research into, for instance, institutional policy and student affairs in offices of institutional research has created identities in which professional and academic activity are both integrated and co-dependent. The impact on professional identity is illustrated in the following account from someone with a background in public policy research:

“I view my principal role as being an effective manager of a public service programme based in an academic department ... the nature of my job places me in a position to be able to serve as an intermediary between members of the policy committee and the academic community. I see myself ... serving that facilitation function, and that ... involves a certain amount of professional creativity and ability to understand the limits of research as it relates to public policy decision-making, and the limits of public policy decision-making as it relates to research.”

This merging of professional and academic strands of activity had a direct impact on this person’s identity, in that it had “allowed me to feel that I could develop professionally in a way that allowed me to practise my management skills and ... also receive some professional recognition within the area of ... public policy.” Thus, another respondent referred to a “shadow or parallel set of academic researchers within the infrastructure of the university, doing research on the university and research on students.” Fields such as institutional research or student affairs, therefore, were likely to shade into what might be seen as applied disciplinary areas in their own right, on which there were significant literatures, produced by professional staff. This duality, and its recognition by colleagues, was something that was not apparent from the study either in a UK or an Australian context. In institutions running master’s programmes for professional staff there were also likely to be close links with the relevant administrative offices, with internships taking place and professional staff being involved in teaching, all of which fostered the overlap of professional and academic domains.

Moreover, some respondents saw themselves as having the possibility of moving into a full-time academic post, although they might be better placed to undertake the research that interested them by being in an office close to the subject of research, be it the student experience, university-state relations, or equity and access. Thus, one individual, who had held an academic post, preferred to be in a policy environment:

“I was never 100% that I was going to stay along the faculty route, mainly because my interests were in areas of college access, choice, equity, and higher education

policy in general... Ours is an applied field, which means that you can take an administrative or industry job and still come back to faculty, as long as you keep writing and publishing.”

Implications for “management” and “leadership”

Whilst *blended professionals* in the UK acknowledged that they had both management and leadership responsibilities in relation to their teams of staff, these activities tended to be downplayed, and to be seen as embedded and implicit in day-to-day operations. One respondent, with a background in the college sector, described how they had emerged, somewhat reluctantly, as a manager:

“... my professional identity would have to be to see myself as an academic. I’d sort of drifted into ... programme management. Then someone told me ‘you are a manager’. I do remember the moment of being told ... and it was quite a difficult idea.”

Perhaps because ideas of “management” and “leadership” are not generally seen as consonant with institutional discourses about academic autonomy, ways in which *blended professionals* described leadership of their staff tended to be in terms of facilitation and development, in the sense of “bringing others on”, thus:

- “... be[ing] open and transparent ... you need to be able to show that you understand the agendas.”
- “... work[ing] with the grain ... and ... listen[ing] with your ears open.”
- “taking a unit forward in terms of priorities and aligning staff towards that vision.”

The idea of setting the local situation in context, translating and interpreting, therefore, was a key one:

- “... [staff] need someone to articulate to them this is the way it is ... looking at the bigger picture.”
- “... you have to work out your rules of engagement ... you can’t really manage without being a leader, and you can’t be a leader without managing... there’s a time for command and control, there’s a time for recognising that this is a management decision that you can’t make on your own...”

There was also awareness of the benefits of spreading leadership capability, for instance by promoting what one respondent referred to as “self-managing teams”, so as to enable others to develop as managers and leaders, using a cascade process to assist with both succession planning and career development. Rather than being located with a single person, therefore, there was a sense of encouraging leadership to grow and ripple out across a field of activity.

In Australia, despite regarding themselves as “managers” rather than “administrators”, a number of respondents wished to distinguish themselves from what were perceived as “managerial” approaches at the corporate level of their institutions, which gave them cause to distance themselves from being seen as “managers” or “leaders” per se. As in the UK, there was a distinction made between “management” and “leadership”, and more creative roles that might have management and leadership components:

- “I prefer to be more in a leadership role for something that’s project related, that’s innovative, and is not constrained by administration and bureaucracy.”

- “I like to get the best out of people but I’d rather do it in a team environment, and I have a more equality-based ... philosophy about work ...”
- “... you have to manage up and sideways ...”
- “[it’s] this covert leadership stuff—I can’t be seen to do it.”

This again raises issues about the nature of management and leadership for people in *blended* roles, and the way in which this might be integrated with functional activity.

In the US, where *blended* roles were more established than in the UK or Australia, leadership was described variously as acting as “a facilitator”, “identifying new initiatives and projects”, “creating opportunities” and “releasing potential”. The inclination appeared to be to take “more of a relational than a positional approach”, and a number of respondents spoke in terms of “servant-leadership”, whilst recognising of the difficulty of reconciling rhetoric and reality:

“I really like to talk about servant-leadership and that I’m really here to serve others and to serve my staff, but in reality I can’t be that way every day... Sometimes I’m pretty authoritarian too and I’ll just make decisions and deal with them afterwards.”

Nevertheless, the extension of professional activity in a more academic direction in the US again pointed up the challenges of “management” in *blended* roles. Some respondents had concerns about managing a budget and fund-raising activity, although there was more widespread concern about managing staff. This appeared to arise from the need to both co-ordinate and direct the work of highly qualified and self-motivated professionals:

- “I know the procedures and policies, but making a diverse group of people work well together is a challenge.”
- “I’ve known [a junior colleague] for a few years through scholarly networks... so I feel uncomfortable thinking of myself as her boss ... My intuition is to give capable people the latitude to do the work without micro-managing them... having high expectations but doing it in a way that’s fair and respectful.”

As in the UK, more than one respondent referred to trying to cascade the practice of leadership amongst their staff, “getting them to exercise their own agency”, saying to them that “you can each be leaders in your own way”. It was also pointed out that there was a difference between leading the work of a team in one’s own area of expertise, and giving breadth of leadership at the institutional level, across a number of domains. Making this transition could also be a challenge for those who had ambitions to achieve a senior management role, especially if they became too embedded in a specific area of activity.

There could also be issues about ways in which such individuals were themselves line managed, for instance, not being given discretion over a budget so as to be able to re-invest savings elsewhere on a project, or being excluded from the outcomes of decisions:

“I feel like I’m a kind of knowledge broker... [but] I don’t hear the end result of the policy making ... I give them pieces of information and I don’t hear ... exactly what happened, so I feel there is a disconnect. I would like to be more involved in the decision-making process. I would like to be more involved in the conceptualisation of the research questions.”

This suggests that some managers of *blended* professionals may have difficulty in adapting their management practice to highly motivated and creative groups of staff.

Although *blended professionals* represented a more established grouping in the US than in the UK or Australia, the emergence of these areas of concern indicates that it is possible

for such identities to become over-stretched. It was suggested by one respondent that those who succeeded in these kinds of environments had a “professional maturity”, based on applied institutional knowledge, political awareness, sensitivity to institutional environments, and a pragmatic approach. Notwithstanding the challenges outlined above, however, respondents in the US appeared to be less tentative about their identities than their UK or Australian counterparts, particularly about what a number of them referred to as “moving the institution forward”.

Concluding remarks

Alongside an increasing functional specialisation to meet, for instance, legislative and market requirements, there would appear to be other identity dynamics occurring for professional staff. These are illustrated by the emergence of people with *blended* identities, who are appointed on the basis of experience that enables them to carry out mixed portfolios in a *third space* between professional and academic domains. They are characterised by an ability to build common ground with a range of colleagues, internal and external to the university, and to develop new forms of professional space, knowledge, relationships and legitimacies associated with broadly based institutional projects such as student life, business development and community partnership.

While such arrangements appear to have been mainstreamed to a significant degree in the US, in the UK and Australia *blended* activity might be said to be at an earlier stage of development, in which individuals continue to be challenged by tensions arising from formal structures and boundaries. The size of the study (54 respondents in 7 case institutions) meant that it was not possible to be overly definitive about conditions that might stimulate the development of *blended* identities. Nevertheless, there appeared to be more evidence of their existence in institutions that were undertaking development activity, for instance, in extending partnership and outreach into the community. In such cases, senior managers may have appointed people with mixed backgrounds who were likely to facilitate new forms of activity, and also recognised that when such people *were* recruited, they would become frustrated if they were then overly restricted.

Professional staff undertaking *blended* forms of activity offer expertise and approaches drawn from both professional and academic spheres of activity, and are contributing to a re-orientation of working patterns in higher education. Institutions in the UK and Australia may wish to take cognisance of the positioning of such staff in the US, and to consider how they might optimise their contribution, as well as issues that arise from more extended ways of working, such as:

- How new forms of activity between professional and academic domains might be developed to institutional advantage.
- Encouragement that might be given to professional staff to extend their profiles by, for instance, contributing to an applied professional knowledge base and disseminating their research and practice.
- The creation of more flexible working patterns and conditions for professional staff who wish to build a portfolio that incorporates academic elements.

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